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This is a working document. It has been prepared to stimulate discussion on how the Government of Malawi and Development Partners can increase and improve the quality of public spending on programmes and interventions to end child marriage in Malawi. The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this document are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of the Government of Malawi and UNICEF.

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Budget Scoping on Programmes and Interventions to



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# **List of Acronyms**

AAAA	Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development
ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AU	African Union
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CCPCs	Community Child Protection Committees
ССРЈА	Child Care, Justice and Protection Act
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CVSU	Community Victim Support Unit
ECM	Ending Child Marriage
ESAR	East and Southern Africa Region
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GENET	Gender Empowerment Network
GNB	Girls Not Brides
GoM	Government of Malawi
IHS	Integrated Household Survey
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDHS	Malawi Demographic Health Survey
MGDS III	Third Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MICS	Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoGCDSW	Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare
MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population
NGO-CCR	Non-Governmental Organisation - Coalition on Child Rights
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLGFC	National Local Government Finance Committee
PBB	Programme-Based Budgeting
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWG	Sector Working Group
TWG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
YONECO	Youth Network and Counselling

# **Executive Summary**

Tackling child marriage is not only a legal obligation, but it is also smart economics and a strategy for achieving Malawi's vision for inclusive and sustainable development. Malawi has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world, with approximately 42 per cent of girls married before the age of 18, and 9 per cent below the age of 15. Some boys, too, are involved in child marriage. A recent study by the University of Zurich et al. (2018) found an estimated 1 per cent of boys marry before the age of 15 and 6 per cent below the age of 18. If not addressed, child marriage has severe social, economic and political consequences. With the launch of the National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage (ECM) in 2018, there is no better time than now for the Government of Malawi (GoM) to accelerate efforts to ECM.

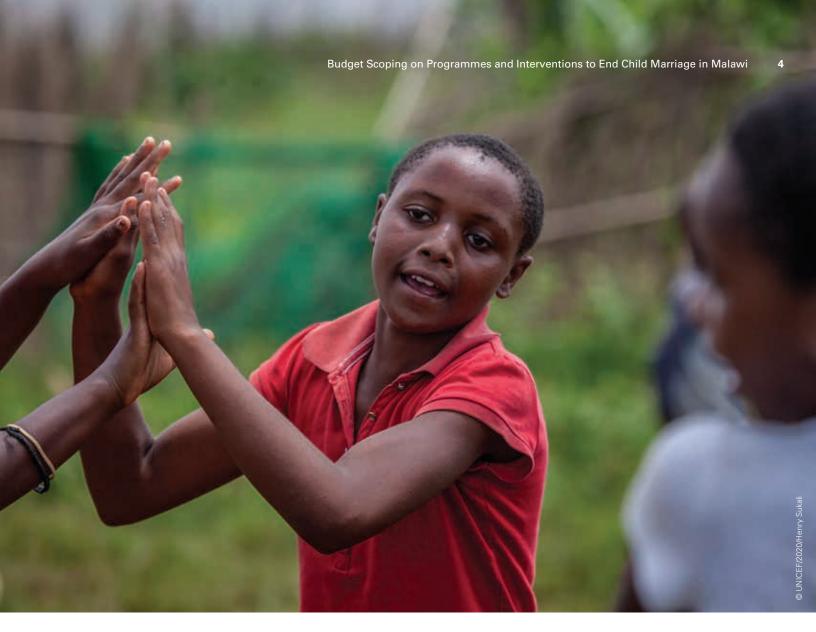
This report assesses the size, composition and equity of public spending on programmes and interventions to ECM by the GoM and its development partners between fiscal years (FYs) 2016/17 and 2018/19. To date, there has not been any budget analysis done to investigate how much of the annual Government budget has been committed to implementing the National Strategy on ECM and other relevant sector strategies. This report is, therefore, part of broader efforts by the GoM to ensure that public spending on child-focused sectors and programmes is adequate, equitable, efficient and effective.

The ECM budget analysis, which culminated in this report, entailed several steps. The analysis began with a listing of all possible interventions to prevent and respond to child marriage, which should be budgeted for by the Government. The listing was based on analysis of main drivers of child marriage in Malawi and past trends. Next, the identified interventions were linked to a Ministry, Department or Agency (MDA). After that, a line by line review of programme-based budgeting (PBBs) for each of the identified MDA was done to isolate ECM relevant budget lines. In total, 17 budget lines were identified across ministries related to ECM but lumped with other programmes. Budget data collected was entered into an excel sheet. This was followed by compilation and organisation of the data by sector, purpose, area, MDA and economic classification.

The next step entailed decision-making on how much indirect budgets could be apportioned to ECM. Information about the content of programmes, target group, utilisation rates and structure of the identified MDA was used to decide on the appropriate share to be apportioned to ECM. The researchers refrained from measuring the size of ECM spending by analysing lumped budgets as this could have led to an overestimation of the level of Government spending on ECM. After apportionment, ECM related expenditures by nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and other development partners were also captured and added to the Government budgets. With all the information organised, what followed was a comprehensive analysis of size, composition and sources of ECM spending. Lastly, interviews with key informants were conducted to collect qualitative information about areas of progress, challenges and recommendations to improve ECM spending in Malawi.

#### **Main findings**

- i. The National Strategy on ECM is yet to find full expression in local and national budgets. By 2019, a year after the launch of the strategy, there was no evidence of changes in allocations, indicators and targets in Malawi's program-based budgets to reflect cost estimates in the strategy as well as progress indicators. At the same time, not all District Councils had allocated resources to Programme 99.01 on primary child protection services.
- ii. In FY 2018-19, the apportioned Government budget to programmes which contribute to prevention and response to child marriage was estimated at MK772 million. This represents a 64 per cent decline in nominal and 71 per cent in real terms, compared to MK2.1 billion nominal allocation in FY 2016-17. The decrease was mainly driven by a reduction in the allocation to the construction of girls' hostels from MK3 billion in the FY 2017-18 to MK800 million in FY 2018-19. Before apportionment, Government budget allocations to all identified ECM related programmes in FY 2018-19, totalled MK5.7 billion, down from MK7 billion in the previous year.



- iii. Off-budget development partners' expenditures, estimated at 73 per cent of total ECM spending, have modestly trended upwards since 2016-17. In 2018-19, development partners committed about MK3.2 billion to ECM compared to MK2.5 billion in FY 2017-18 and MK2.2 billion in FY 2016-17. Concerns have, however, been raised by stakeholders regarding distribution and utilisation of partnerresources. For example, while there is coordination at the programme implementation level, there is a minimum effort by some NGOs and donors to discuss the allocation of resources for ECM interventions jointly.
- iv. When combined, ECM related budgets from the GoM and development partners added up to MK4 billion in FY 2018-19. This represents a nominal decrease of 14 per cent and 31 per cent in real terms, compared to MK4.6 billion allocated in the previous year.
- Government (86.4 per cent) are channelled through the education sector to keep girls in school. The second-highest share of Government allocations to ECM went to gender and social welfare sector, consuming about 8.4 per cent of the total ECM budget. The justice, human rights and security sector came third, taking up about 2.5 per cent of the FY 2018-19 total ECM budget. Spending on health-related ECM interventions have been low at around 1.95 per cent of total ECM spending. This reflects skewed sectoral allocations to ECM, considering that there are six outcome areas in the National Strategy on ECM.

- vi. ECM expenditures by NGOs are widely distributed across several areas. Self-reported data from NGOs showed that in FY 2018-19, 24 per cent of ECM expenditures were on spent on case management, 19 per cent on girls' and women empowerment and 19 per cent on coordination for joint analysis, awareness-raising, community engagements and advocacy. The remaining 38 per cent was scattered across a wide range of initiatives.
- vii. If the National Strategy is to be fully implemented, on average, an additional MK6 billion will be required every year until FY 2022/23. Available resources from both Government and development partners constitute about 48 per cent of cost estimates in the National Strategy on ECM.



#### Recommendations

- Strengthen the investment case for ECM. The Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW), especially the Directorate on Children's Affairs, should work with the ECM Task Force to raise the profile of the National Strategy on ECM in planning and budgeting circles, through the development of an investment case. This role is befitting considering that the directorate is also chair of the ECM Task Force.
- Enhance the visibility of ECM in PBBs of relevant MDAs, especially the MoGCDSW. The study recommends inclusion of at least one indicator and performance target, aligned to the National Strategy on ECM, in the PBBs of the MoGCDSW and District Councils. This is crucial if the Government is to track progress in the implementation of the National Strategy on ECM and subsequently attain the relevant targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Review cost estimates in the National Strategy on ECM to cover missing elements and increase the size of Government spending on ECM. Cost estimates in the National Strategy on ECM are understated because many aspects have been left out, including funding for case management, child participation, social service/child protection workforce, professional development of existing staff, data and statistics.

- Increase the size of transfers to District Councils for the Gender Sector and ensure each District Council has a budget line on 'primary child protection services' (programme 99.01). The transfers to District Councils (averaging MK200,000) per month are insufficient to make a difference.
- Alongside efforts to mobilise additional resources to cover the funding gap, there is a need to strengthen efforts to ensure efficient and effective use of all available domestic and external resources for ECM. This can be achieved through strengthening joint planning and budgeting across sectors and with NGOs as well as improving transparency and accountability in public spending on ECM by all actors.
- Development partners to support the GoM to tap into global resources on child protection to complement what is provided for through Government budgets. Given the small size of the economy and consequently limited domestic revenue mobilization capacity, aid will continue to be critical for Malawi.

## **Chapter 1**

# Introduction and Background to the Study

#### 1.1 Introduction

This report assesses the size, composition and equity of public spending on programmes to ending child marriage (ECM) by the GoM and its development partners (DPs) between fiscal years (FYs) 2016-17 and 2018-19.

The report is one of several, which explores the extent to which the national budget addresses the needs of children under age 18 in Malawi. The report also offers insights into allocative efficiency, equity and adequacy of public spending on programmes to prevent and respond to child marriage. Lastly, it provides baseline information on the scope and size of public budgets committed to implementing the National Strategy on ECM in Malawi. The strategy, which is costed, was launched on March 8th, 2018.

Child marriage is defined as a union or partnership involving a person below the age of 18. This is the definition that has been adopted by the GoM, in line with its international commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979), and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) (1990). The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender also commits member states to ensure that no person under the age of 18 shall marry.

The study is part of broader efforts by the GoM to ensure that public spending on child-focused sectors and programmes is adequate, equitable, transparent, efficient and effective. The report builds on Government efforts to strengthen the protective environment for all children in Malawi. Without committing resources towards their implementation, child rights policies and strategies will remain empty promises.

To date, there has not been any budget analysis done to assess how much of the available resources have been committed to implementing the National Strategy on ECM, and other relevant sector strategies, except for a broad-based child protection budget analysis conducted by UNICEF in 2019. The child protection budget analysis did not delve deep into specific issues like child marriage. It is against this background that the MoGCDSW, in partnership with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Malawi, carried out a budget scoping exercise to examine the level and scope of public spending on ECM programmes.

Tackling child marriage is not only a legal obligation, but it is also smart economics and a strategy for achieving sustainable development. If not addressed, child marriage has severe social, economic and political consequences. According to the World Bank (2011), the aggregated lifetime social and economic costs of child marriage can be as high as 27 per cent of Malawi's current gross domestic product (GDP). The World Bank (2018) estimated that the demographic returns due to ECM in Malawi could reach US\$500 million in purchasing power parity (PPP) by 2030 and that ECM in Malawi could generate education budget savings of up to US\$108 million by 2030.

The social development consequences of child marriage are also very high. Child marriages lead to high fertility rates – exacerbating the problem of rapid population growth by pushing girls into an early reproductive role. In Malawi, approximately 29 per cent of girls aged 15-19 are already mothers or pregnant with their first child.

A girl marrying at age 13 rather than at age 18 or later increases the number of children a woman will have by an average of 12.2 per cent. Children born of young mothers are at higher risk of dying before the age of 5 due to stunting and other child health-related problems.

Child marriage also has severe impacts on learning, including contributing to low secondary school completion rates. In Malawi, only 45 per cent of girls stay in school beyond standard eight (8th grade).

Each additional year a girl completes in secondary school reduces the likelihood of marrying as a child by 3.7 percentage points. Regrettably, most young girls who leave school due to child marriage are faced with few opportunities to earn a living, making them more vulnerable to gender-based violence (GBV). Child marriage lowers women's expected earnings in adulthood by between 1.4 and 15.6 per cent. ECM could increase total earnings at the national level by 1.61 per cent in Malawi (World Bank 2018).

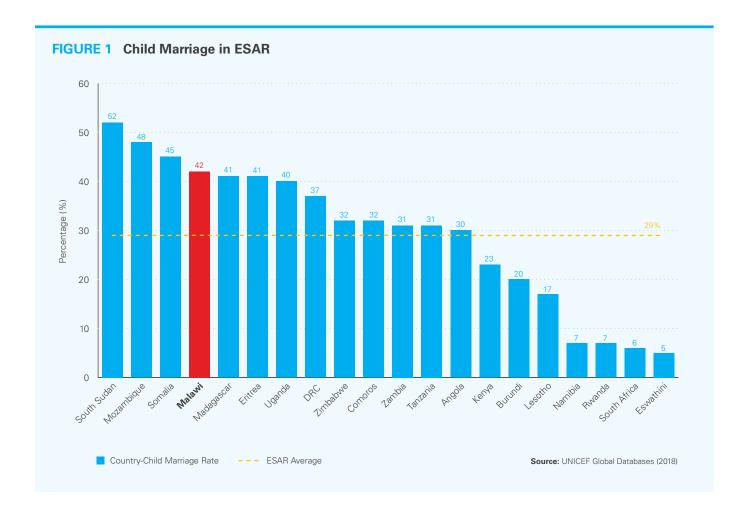
#### 1.2 Child Marriage Situation in Malawi

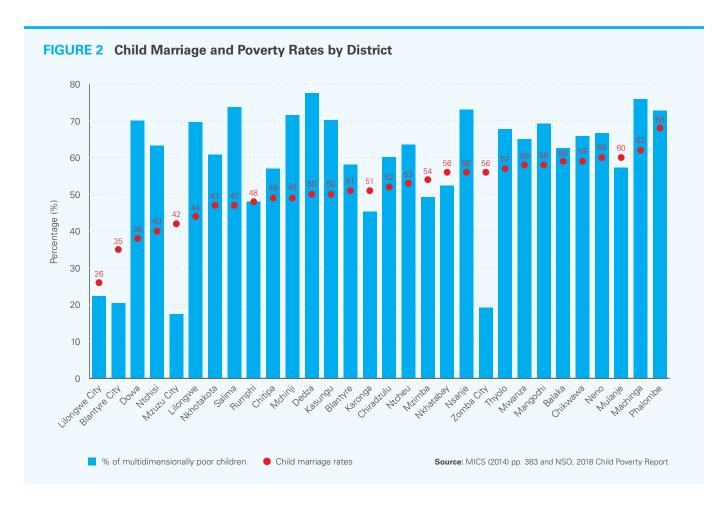
With approximately 42 per cent of girls married before the age of 18 and 9 per cent below the age of 15, Malawi has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world (University of Zurich et al. 2018). Malawi has the fourth-highest child marriage rate in East and Southern Africa (ESAR), as shown in Figure 1. Approximately 7 per cent of boys marry before the age of 18 (Ibid).

Within the country, there are noteworthy disparities in child marriage rates. Child marriage is higher in rural than urban areas, although there are huge variations within rural areas. Data from the 2014 Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) shows that Phalombe District has the highest child marriage rate of 68 per cent while Dowa has the least (38 per cent), amongst rural Districts. Rural girls, most of which are poor, are 1.6 times more likely to marry early than their urban counterparts. By region, women in the South (which

is predominantly rural and poor) marry at a slightly lower age than those in the North and Central. Regional variations in child marriage are consistent with other development indicators such as poverty, where the Southern region generally perform poorly.

The desire to start a family is one of the top reasons for child marriage in Malawi. A recent survey on traditional practices by the University of Zurich et al. (2018), showed that the decision to marry is often perceived to be taken by individuals themselves, even though there are cases in which this decision is perceived to be made by others. Most individuals reported that they mostly decided by themselves to get married. This finding has implications on the targeting of behavioural communications.





Poverty is, however, a key underlying driver of high child marriage rates in Malawi. Three of the five poorest Districts (Phalombe, Mulanje and Machinga) also have highest child marriage rates (68 per cent, 62 per cent and 60 per cent, respectively) as shown in Figure 2. Children from more impoverished families are twice as much likely to marry early than their counterparts from households which are not monetarily poor. This finding is consistent with global trends, whereby high child marriages rates are found in developing countries. Poverty is widespread in Malawi. Recent statistics show that 51.5 per cent of the people in Malawi live below the poverty line and this is higher in rural areas at 60 per cent compared to urban areas at 18 per cent (NSO, 2018). At the same time, about 60.5 per cent of children are deprived in two or more dimensions.

Child marriage is more prevalent amongst girls and families with less education than those with a good education. The prevalence of child marriage amongst girls with secondary education (19 per cent) is three times less

than their counterparts with just primary education (59 per cent). At the same time, the proportion of both male and female parents engaged in a customary marriage involving children, decreases as the level of education attained goes up (University of Zurich et al. 2018). According to the Malawi Demographic Health Survey (MDHS) (2015/16), women with no education in Malawi marry 7.2 years earlier than their counterparts with more than secondary.

Low transition rates to secondary school by both girls and boys account for high child marriage rates. Only 38.4 per cent of children transition from primary to secondary school (40.9 per cent for boys and 35.8 per cent for girls), and of those, only 8 per cent move on to tertiary education (EMIS, 2018).

Harmful social norms, cultural and religious beliefs also fuel child marriage. Traditional initiation practices, done as part of a rite of passage when a girl reaches puberty, have encouraged early sexual activity. A recent study by

the University of Zurich et al. (2018), also showed that the prevalence of child marriage is higher among matrilineal than patrilineal groups.

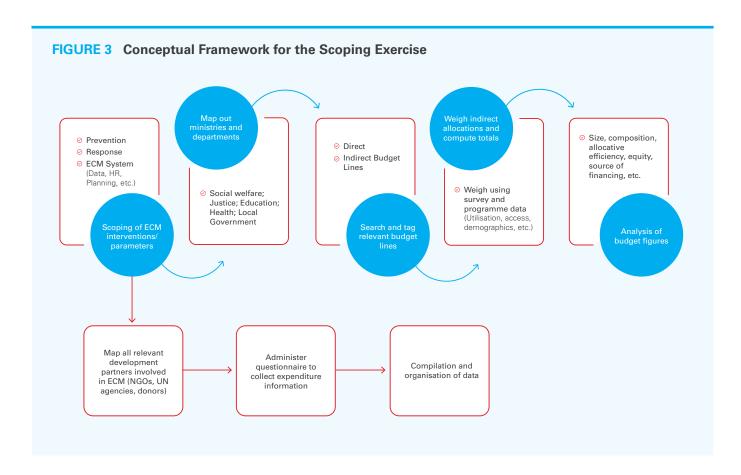
In addition to poverty, recurrent droughts and floods also increase the vulnerability of girls to child marriage. Due to food insecurity, child marriage often becomes a more likely coping mechanism, as families seek to reduce the burden of feeding the family. Climatic challenges, such as droughts and floods, have become more frequent and catastrophic.

#### 1.3 Methodology of the Budget Scoping Exercise

The budget scoping and analysis, which culminated in this report, entailed several steps (Figure 3). Firstly, a list of all possible interventions to prevent and respond to child marriage was drawn through a consultative process. In drawing the list of interventions, the researchers considered the main drivers of child marriage as well as past trends. The National Strategy on ECM was a natural starting point because it already has a list of programmes to prevent child marriage. To comprehensively identify all relevant interventions, a

systems approach was applied, whereby the researchers mapped out a range of initiatives, services, institutions and programmes across sectors (education, health, justice, agriculture, etc.) which should work together to ECM. The approach also entailed an examination of interventions to address underlying drivers of child marriage. The output of this exercise was a list of possible ECM interventions by sector (Annex 1).

Second, a matching exercise was done to link identified interventions related to child marriage with an MDA. Several MDAs were identified including, but not limited to, ministries of education, justice, home affairs, gender, local Government and health. Quasi-Government agencies such as the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC) were also linked to certain interventions. The process of linking interventions to specific MDAs was consultative – involving relevant Government departments and civil society partners –confirming if indeed, an institution had the mandate to implement specific ECM interventions. This step laid the foundation for the tracking of budget lines on programmes and initiatives to ECM.



Third, a line by line review of PBBs for each of the selected MDAs was done to see if the identified interventions were reflected in Government budgets. For FYs 2017/18 to 2018/19, a word search was done since the researchers had access to soft copies of budget documents. The identification of ECM related budget lines, however, proved to be a challenging exercise because all identified interventions were neither programmes nor cost centres with identifiable budget lines. It turned out that all ECM related interventions were lumped up with other programmes.

Relevant budget information was also collected from District Councils. In addition to reviewing PBBs for local authorities, a specific questionnaire was circulated to all the 28 District Councils to collect information about Government and NGO expenditures on ECM. Twenty-three of the District Councils responded, giving a response rate of 82 per cent. Field visits to nine Districts (three from each region), were conducted to gather more qualitative information on the size, composition and efficiency of ECM spending. Interviews were held with social welfare officers, NGOs, directors of finance, mothers' groups and members of the Malawi Police Service.

#### Fourth, to better understand the composition of indirect budget lines, additional information was collected from MDAs through a questionnaire and face to face interviews.

The information collected included contents, targets, coverage and reach of specific programmes/interventions. This information was collected through a semi-structured questionnaire followed by interviews with key informants. Out of the 18 questionnaires which were circulated to MDAs, 12 of them were returned. Eleven of which were followed by face-to-face interviews.

Fifth, information on ECM expenditures by NGOs and other development partners was collected using a questionnaire as well as face to face interviews. This process started with a mapping of local and international civil society organisations working to ECM. The study found that in 2018, 18 local civil society organisations, three international NGOs, four donor organisations and three United Nations (UN) Agencies had funded projects contributing to ECM. The annual budgets of organisations varied significantly from about US\$10,000 to about US\$400,000 per year. The study also noted that there were several organisations involved in the fight against child marriage who did not have dedicated budget lines. These include the NGO Coalition on Children's

Rights (NGO CCR), Malawi Human Rights and Youth Network and Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP). The study did not capture their 'in-kind' contributions.

The sixth step entailed compilation and organisation of quantitative budget data collected from Government (at the national and local level), NGOs and donors. Information was organised by sector, programme focus and whether the resources were managed from the national or sub-national structures. Additionally, information collected was classified into direct and indirect budgets. Indirect budgets refer to financial commitments to interventions which contribute to ECM but are not primarily designed for this purpose. These include social cash transfer programmes, construction of girls' hostels, child justice, and sexual and reproductive health services. Direct budgets, on the other hand, refer to financial commitments which are designed with the deliberate intention to ECM. This means that most or all the committed resources are used for prevention and response to ECM. Examples of direct budget lines include scholarships for poorest and marginalised girls, ECM awareness campaigns and child protection services using a case management approach. Annex 2 provides a list of direct and indirect budget line items, identified during the budget analysis.

The seventh step involved apportionment of indirect budgets to ECM. This exercise aimed to estimate a 'reasonable' share of the indirect budgets that could be counted as ECM spending. In doing so, a weighting approach was used based on analysis of several factors including content (constituent parts) of a given program, target population, utilisation of particular services and coverage. The logic behind this was that adding all indirect budgets, without apportionment, would have overstated ECM expenditures. Apportionments were only done for Government spending. For NGOs and donors, the questionnaire only captured direct budget lines. The total budget for ECM was defined as the sum-total of all direct budget lines and weighted indirect budgets from domestic and international resources.

The final step entailed the analysis of quantitative and qualitative information to identify emerging trends on areas of progress and challenges with regards to public spending on ECM. Several themes emerged ranging from coordination challenges, inequitable resource allocation to District Councils and various ECM programmes, as well

as reports of inefficient and ineffective spending. From the qualitative data collected, key policy recommendations on how the financing of programmes and interventions to ECM can be improved were also weaved out.

#### **1.4 Study Limitations**

In undertaking the budget scoping exercise, several challenges were encountered. Firstly, it was challenging to identify ECM related budget lines as they were lumped up with other programmes. The researchers had to rely on information collected through face-to-face interviews with Government officials.

The second challenge was that the researchers were not able to interview all sampled respondents from Government. About 30 per cent of the targeted Government officials were not available, even after several follow-ups. At least key ministries, notably Gender, Education and Health participated in the study.

The third challenge is that precise apportionment of budget lines to specific lines was not easy for several programmes. For instance, it was difficult to disaggregate police expenditure per activity at the region and station level as most procurements like fuel, stationery and vehicle maintenance are centrally done. Therefore, a consensus-building approach was used whereby estimated weights were discussed with child protection and public finance experts within UNICEF and the MoGCDSW.

The fourth challenge was that it was not possible to get data on actual expenditures by the GoM. Due to the lack of expenditure data, the researchers utilised budget allocations as a proxy for actual expenditures. Considering that there is often a very low variance between approved and revised budgets for other recurrent transactions, budget allocations were considered as a reasonable measurement of how much the Government was investing in ECM programmes.

The fifth limitation, more of a caveat, is that the researchers could not verify self-reported data by NGOs and donors. There is always a risk of under/overestimation of expenditures in self-reported data. Lastly, it was not possible to interview all relevant MDAs as initially envisaged. Notwithstanding the above limitations, both quantitative and qualitative data collected was sufficient to allow for meaningful analysis and conclusions.

#### 1.5 Structure of the Report

The rest of the report is divided as follows. Chapter two highlights key policies and strategies, which, in theory, should guide resource allocation to ECM programmes. Chapter three presents findings on public spending trends on programmes and interventions to ECM. The fourth and final chapter outlines the conclusions of the study and proffers recommendations moving forward.



## **Chapter 2**

# ECM Legal, Policy and Strategic Frameworks

#### 2.1 International Legal and Policy Framework

Malawi is a party to various global and regional commitments that prohibit child marriage. These include the CRC adopted in 1989 and the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979. The CEDAW requires state parties to take appropriate measures to protect girls from all forms of discrimination against women and girls. Article 6 of the CEDAW prohibits child marriage explicitly. It states that the betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken by state parties to specify a minimum age for marriage. While child marriage is not referred to directly in the CRC (1989), it is connected to other rights such as the right to protection from all forms of abuse and harmful practices.

Article four of the CRC requires state parties to undertake measures to mobilise and allocate resources towards the implementation of children's rights. This means that it is the responsibility of every Government to ensure that public resources are committed to implementing national and international commitments to ECM. The article requires state parties to commit available resources "to the maximum extent possible and, where needed, within the framework of international co-operation" to implement children's rights. During its 2015 Universal Periodic Review, Malawi supported recommendations to ensure successful implementation of strategies and legal reforms to ECM.

**ECM is enshrined in Agenda 2030.** SDG 5 on gender equality calls for the elimination of all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation (Target 5.3). SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions commits state parties to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children (Target 16.2). Malawi also co-sponsored the 2013 UN General Assembly resolution on child, early and forced marriage, and signed a joint statement at the 2014 Human Rights Council calling for a resolution on child marriage. At the Girl Summit in July 2014, the Government also signed a charter committing to ECM by 2020.

At the regional level, the African Union (AU) and SADC have condemned child marriage and have called upon their member states to accelerate efforts to address this challenge. Recently, the SADC adopted a model law on eradicating child marriage and protecting children already in marriage. The model law aims to guide state parties to develop effective national laws to ECM and address inconsistencies in their current legal frameworks<sup>1</sup>. Malawi is one of the 20 countries which has committed to ECM by the end of 2020 under the Ministerial Commitment on comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents and young people in Eastern and Southern Africa.

#### 2.2 National Policies and Strategic Frameworks

Malawi has developed several policies, laws and strategic frameworks that prohibits child marriage. To begin with, the Constitution of Malawi provides for protection and promotion of the welfare of children. By making 18 years the legal majority age, the Constitution makes it clear that the minimum age for marriage is 18 years. Also, the Government enacted the Child Care, Justice and Protection Act (CCPJA) in 2010, which provides a comprehensive framework for child care, protection and justice. Section 81 of the Act categorically prohibits forcing children into marriage, while Section 80 prohibits cultural practices that are undesirable to the development of the child. The Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act (2015) raised the marriage age to 18 and has since become a model law for other African nations to emulate. Article 6 of the Act states that the state shall provide protection of young children whenever their healthy development is threatened. Articles 10, 11 and 15 supplements this provision.

In addition to the above laws, in 2019, the Government launched the National Children's Policy which prohibits child marriage, noting that it is a hindrance to the development of children and the country. In 2019, the National Children Commission Act (2019) was enacted into law. This Act provides for the establishment of a National Children's Commission responsible for policy guidance to

<sup>1</sup> SADC (2018), A Guide to Using the SADC Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Children Already in Marriage, Gaborone, SADC.

Government and multi-sectoral coordination of children's issues and programmes, including making children more visible in Government plans and budgets.

In 2018, the Government launched the National Strategy on ECM (2018-2022). The strategy, which was costed, is expected to be a guiding tool for MDAs, NGOs and other development partners on how to approach ECM interventions. It is estimated that an average of MK11 billion will be required every year to implement the strategy. Implementation of the strategy is coordinated by a multi-sectoral Task Force comprised of Government officials, civil society organisations and representatives of donor organisations, chaired by the MoGCDSW. The Task Force has not, however, been convened as expected. The strategy advocates for a multi-sectoral approach to ECM, involving several ministries and stakeholders across sectors.

The National Strategy to ECM is in line with the third Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III). MGDS III, running from 2017 to 2022, has prioritized public investments in sectors which improve child well-being such as health and education. Under Priority 4 of the MGDS III, on health and population, the Government committed itself to enforce all legislation which prohibits child marriage as a means of controlling fertility and subsequently rapid population growth. The MGDS III also highlights the need for state and non-state actors to work together to reduce harmful practices such as child marriage.

Guided by the above laws, policies and strategies, the Government has adopted a transformative approach to ECM. The approach entails a continuum of interventions which includes prevention of child marriage before it occurs, and an effective early response and referral mechanism to limit the harmful effects of child marriage. A system for the treatment and aftercare for victims to facilitate recovery was also included. One transformative approach used in Malawi is called the 'Journey of Life', which entails mobilisation of communities to identify and act on issues of child protection. Journey of Life activities often leads to the establishment of community child protection committees, community victim support units (CVSUs), Community-Based Child Care Centres (CBCCs) and Children's Corners (CCs).<sup>2</sup>

#### 2.3 National Institutional Framework to ECM

Successful implementation of ECM Interventions requires multi-sectoral efforts involving MDAs, NGOs and communities. The National Children's Policy, National ECM Strategy and the National Plan of Action (NPA) for Vulnerable Children (VC) provides for coordination mechanism for implementation of ECM initiatives. Key to ECM coordination is the MoGCDSW which leads the Gender, Children, Youth, and Sports Sector Working Group (SWG), Social Welfare Technical Working Group (TWG) as well as Child Development and Gender TWGs. However, being multi-stakeholder platforms, SWGs and TWGs tend to discuss broader issues and rarely focus on ECM. However, while ECM was not given due attention in the past year, TWGs are flexible to adopt ECM as an agenda item for discussion.

An ECM Taskforce was established under the National Strategy on ECM to consolidate all coordination efforts on child marriage. As indicated earlier, the Taskforce comprises of MDAs, NGOs and development partners such as UNICEF, UN Women and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). It is expected to convene every quarter to jointly plan, execute and monitor ECM interventions across the country. It is also an information-sharing platform of financing opportunities available. However, despite recognizing the need for adequate financing of the National ECM strategy, the Task Force has not been successful in mobilizing resources for its operations.

In addition to the Taskforce as well as SWG and TWGs, other key MDAs including Health, Justice, Police and Judiciary, which play crucial roles in ECMs, also have their coordination mechanisms. For instance, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) coordinates the effective implementation of the re-admission policy for girls that have been withdrawn from marriages. At the same time, the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs has its structures to ensure there is a supportive legal environment for the implementation of children's rights. The police and social welfare officers, on the other hand, also have their structures and coordination mechanisms. Unfortunately, most of these structures have limited human, technical and financial resources to perform their functions.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, (2018), Journey of Life: Community Awareness and Mobilization Tool in Achieving Child Protection Results in Malawi, May 2016, UNICEF, Government of Malawi.

There are also local structures which complement those at the national level. For instance, most District Councils have established Child Development and Social Welfare TWGs. However, in some Districts, TWGs are not functional due to resource challenges. In Districts where they are active, it is mainly because of financial and technical support from NGOs and other development partners. At Traditional Authority (TA) level, CVSUs, Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Children's Corners, Mothers' Groups and Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs)3 are playing pivotal roles in fighting child marriage. They have a systematic way of recording and following up child marriage cases. Community Child Protection Workers (CCPWs) support most of the above structures. These are para social workers, many of whom are trained in case management to facilitate early identification, referral and management of cases of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect, which includes child marriages.

Parents and guardians are also involved in the fight against child marriage, through initiatives such as Mothers' Groups. Several Mothers' Groups are working hand in hand with communities to ensure that girls are not forced into marriage and support those that have been withdrawn from marriages. Mothers' Groups also warn parents and girls on the ills of child marriage. The CCPJA requires parents, guardians and appropriate adults to report or accompany children to the police, social welfare officer or other responsible authorities in cases where it is being suspected that a child has been subjected to child marriage.

To foster child and youth participation in the promotion and protection of their rights, the Government is encouraging communities to set up Children's Corners (CCs). CCs promote healthy and positive social interactions between girls and boys and can facilitate interaction with mentors and positive role models, thereby serving as forums to promote and nurture children and adolescents. They also act as HIV and AIDS impact mitigation points as HIV-positive children are also supported to deal with stigma and discrimination and are offered psychosocial support.<sup>4</sup>

Development partners, including civil society organisations, are also complementing Government efforts to tackle child marriage. According to the National Children's Policy, development partners are expected to provide technical and financial support to the MoGCDSW and other stakeholders on ECM. Some NGOs have lived up to this expectation and have created coordination platforms for promoting ECM interventions. These include Coalitions such as Girls Not Brides (GNB) and the Gender Empowerment Network (GENET) which have made tremendous strides in creating awareness on ECM issues. GNB Malawi, for example, with a membership of sixty-three civil society organisations have been involved in several actions to ECM. Created in 2012, the coalition became an official Girls Not Brides National Partnership in November 2017 and has supported evidence generation, capacity development, advocacy and coordination of ECM interventions among CSOs. GNB also supports community leaders to play an active role in prevention and response to child marriage.

## 2.4 Scope of ECM Programmes and Interventions in Malawi

Child marriage is a multi-dimensional problem which requires several interventions across sectors and geographic areas. Sector-wise, ECM interventions in Malawi are mainly being implemented in gender, health, education, justice and security sectors. The gender sector led by the MoGCDSW has two programmes that focus on ECM, namely GBV and primary child protection which are implemented in collaboration with the Malawi Police and Judiciary. Also, the MoGCDSW, in collaboration with UNICEF, introduced a robust child protection case management approach as a tool for handling child marriage. The health sector, through the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), implements the sexual reproductive health programme. At the same time, the MoEST promotes the inclusive education programme, to mention only a few examples. These national programmes are replicated at District level.

<sup>3</sup> CCPCs identify occurrences of child marriages and report them to various structures and authorities including CVSUs and the police. Police, representatives of chiefs and other extension workers are members of the CVSU.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, (2018), Children's Corner Services in Malawi, Review Report 2017, UNICEF, Government of Malawi.

#### BOX 1

# **About the Case Management Approach**

The Government of Malawi adopted case management as an approach for child protection service delivery in 2012 to improve the quality of care and support for vulnerable children. Case management links children to the services they require, sets standards and provides a step by step guide on handling cases of children at risk of or being subjected to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. Through the case management process, a child is recruited at intake level, is assessed and provided with appropriate services and graduates at case closure when the case manager is satisfied with the services provided.

Source: UNICEF, 2019

Programmes to address child marriage are primarily multi-component by design. Multi-component interventions combine two or more forms of interventions. For example, the sub-programme on child protection in the MoGCDSW combines advocacy and legal activities. Several ECM interventions combine empowerment, social protection to most deprived children and their families, community sensitisation and engagement as well as legal assistance and advocacy.

**Empowerment programmes comprise of interventions** that improve resilience, skills and knowledge of communities and children themselves as a prerequisite for fighting child marriage. ECM programmes that fall under this category include GBV campaigns, children's corners, safe schools programmes, primary child protection services and sexual and reproductive health services. These programmes empower communities and girls to make decisions and take actions that combat child marriage. Other programmes which contribute to the empowerment of girls include community colleges under the MoGCDSW - which accord them with the opportunity to pursue tertiary education, thereby delaying their marriage. Social protection is also an essential strategy for reducing the vulnerability of girls to child marriages. In Malawi, the Social Cash Transfer is cited as a model example in this regard. The programme has a conditional grant element, whereby families get a school bonus for keeping their children in school. Cash transfers have also contributed to the reduction of ultra-poverty in Malawi.

Community sensitisation and engagement programmes involve dissemination of information and knowledge regarding the evils of child marriage. The MoGCDSW, with support from UNICEF and other stakeholders, has been implementing a campaign to end violence against children, which includes issues to do with child marriage. Several NGOs, Mothers' Groups and religious organisations are also involved in community sensitisation campaigns. For example, Youth Network and Counselling (YONECO) has been rolling out media campaigns and community sensitisation events on child marriage. Within religious circles, Nkhoma Synod<sup>5</sup> is probably one of the most active. In 2018, Nkhoma Synod issued a pastoral letter that was read in 196 congregations of the Synod reaching 803,000 members. These programmes are contributing to change in communities' attitude towards child marriage.

To conclude this section, it is fair to say that Malawi has achieved remarkable progress in establishing a robust legal and strategic framework to ECM. The next milestone is to ensure their full implementation. With this background, the next chapter will discuss public spending trends on programmes and interventions to ECM.

<sup>5</sup> Nkhoma Synod is a congregation of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), which was founded in 1889. CCAP is one of the largest Protestant churches in Malawi. In 2019, the CCAP had nearly 201 congregations and about one million members.

# **Chapter 3**

# Trends in Public Spending to End Child Marriage in Malawi

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the main findings of the ECM budget scoping exercise. The first section discusses the extent to which the National Strategy on ECM is reflected in national and local budgets. In the second section, estimates of the size of spending on ECM from both domestic and international resources are presented. The third section examines the composition of ECM spending. In the final section, the sources of financing and funding gaps are discussed.

# 3.2 Links Between ECM Strategy and Government Budgets

The National Strategy on ECM is yet to find full expression in local and national budgets. This is according to feedback from most stakeholders, including some Government officials. A significant number of respondents contacted as part of this study strongly believe that there is a risk of a "business as usual" approach with regards to the National Strategy on ECM, whereby policies and strategies are developed but not accompanied by a commitment of human, technical and financial resources for their implementation. Therefore, this report is one of the many efforts to make a case for the GoM to institute the necessary budgetary measures to implement the National Strategy on ECM as well as other related sector plans.

and Government budgeting was also observed in child-focused ministries such as Gender, Health and Education. No evidence was found of change in allocations, indicators and targets in Malawi's PBBs, in response to the launch of the National Strategy on ECM at both national and local level. In the period under review (FYs 2016/17 - 2018/19), none of the social sector ministries, including the MoGCDSW, had a specific performance target and indicator related to child marriage despite the National Strategy on ECM and SDG target 5.1. Moreover, in all the MDAs sampled for the budget scoping exercise, it was challenging to identify subprogrammes which are mainly about ECM. But invisibility of programmes to ECM was not the only issue. The other issue is that allocations to the few programmes related to ECM

The weak link between the National Strategy on ECM

(indirect budget lines) especially in the MoGCDSW such as 'primary child protection services', actually went down. One would have expected an increase, especially in the FY 2018-19, in response to additional financial needs required to implement the National ECM Strategy. Encouragingly at least, in the 2018-19 PBB for the MoGCDSW, child marriage was identified as a key programme issue of concern to the Ministry.

The invisibility of child marriage in Government budgets is also pronounced at the sub-national level. Child marriage is not visible in the PBBs of local authorities. Until recently, the emphasis has been put on the need for central Government to allocate resources to ECM Strategy at Ministerial Level without paying attention to the role of local authorities. Moving forward, local authorities are expected to do more towards the implementation of programmes to prevent and respond to cases of child marriage.

# The invisibility of ECM related programmes in the PBBs for the MoGCDSW has been attributed to several factors.

First, the MoGCDSW receives "perennially low ceilings which makes the introduction of new budget lines difficult"7. Second, the case for investing in ECM programmes has "either been poorly communicated to or not properly understood by staff in planning and budgeting of relevant ministries." ECM is rarely featured in strategic issues papers which guide resource allocation each year. In the MoGCDSW, for example, it is the responsibility of the Department of Child Affairs and partly Social Welfare to plan and budget for ECM programmes. One Government official who participated in the study reiterated the need for the relevant departments in each MDA to ensure that ECM related programmes are considered in strategic issues papers and subsequently in resource allocation. The official stated that: "the responsibility to ensure ECM interventions are budgeted for, primarily lies with the relevant thematic departments. It is them that should include ECM interventions in their annual budget proposals. If they do not, planning and budgeting sections cannot introduce items that were not included in departmental submissions."9

<sup>7</sup> Interview with a Government official, Lilongwe, 7 June 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with a Government official, Lilongwe, 12 June 2019. 9 Interview with a Government official, Lilongwe, 22 July 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with a civil society official, Lilongwe, 8 June 2019

#### **BOX 2**

# MDAs with ECM Related Budget Lines

- Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW) (Vote 320)
- Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) (Vote 310)
- **⊘** Child Justice Court (CJC) (010), under the Judiciary (Vote 070)

- Ministry of Civic Education, Culture and Community Development (now disbanded) (Vote 170)

All ECM related budget lines in Government PBBs are lumped up with other programmes, thereby falling in the category of indirect budget lines. Just by reading budget documents, it was not possible to tell which programme or sub-programme contains elements to do with child marriage. The researchers had to rely on interviews with relevant Government officials to know what was contained under each program. This way, the study confirmed what one respondent mentioned during the inception workshop that "there is no such thing as a budget for child marriage."

Although indirect, at the national level, eight MDAs had ECM-related budget lines in FY 2018-19 (Box 2). From these MDAs, 19 indirect budget lines, at the national and sub-national level, were found which contribute to ECM. It is these budget lines which were reviewed and apportioned to come up with a figure on how much the Government is spending on ECM.

The MoGCDSW (Vote 320), being the lead on children's affairs had the highest number of ECM related subprogrammes between 2016-17 and 2018-19. These include 'Primary child protection services', 'Social cash transfer', 'Gender mainstreaming' and 'GBV'. Two indirect interventions were identified under the MoEST, notably 'Construction of girls hostels (project 066)' and 'Bursaries'. Although the Child Justice Court was identified as a relevant ECM cost centre, given that it has jurisdiction over child abuse related cases, it does not necessarily deal with so many cases of child marriage. Most of them are referred to the Magistrate Courts.

TABLE 1 List of ECM related sub-programmes in various MDAs

Sector	MDA	Identified Budget Lines	
Gender and Social Welfare	MoGCDSW (Vote 320)	69.02 Gender Mainstreaming	
		69.03 Gender Based Violence	
		71.01. Primary Child Protection Services	
		99.01. Primary Child Protection Services	
		71.05. Social Cash Transfer	
Community Development	Ministry of Civic Education, Culture and Community Development (Vote 170)	70.02 Community Mobilization & Capacity Building	
Health	MoHP (Vote 310)	Reproductive Health	
		Safe Motherhood	
		Health Education	
Education	MoEST (Vote 250)	060 Construction of Girls' Hostels	
		Bursaries	
Justice, Security and	Malawi Police Service (Vote 341)	Community Policing	
Human Rights	Malawi Human Rights Commission (Vote 430)	98.1 Human Rights Promotion	
		98.2 Human Rights Protection	
	Judiciary - Child Justice Court (070)	010 Child Justice Court	
	Ministry of Justice & Constitutional Affairs (Vote 350)	79.10 Human Rights Support	

Source: Ministry of Finance, PBBs (2016-17 to 2018/19)

<sup>10</sup> Comment by a civil society official during an inception workshop for the budget scoping exercise. Lilonawe. June 2019.

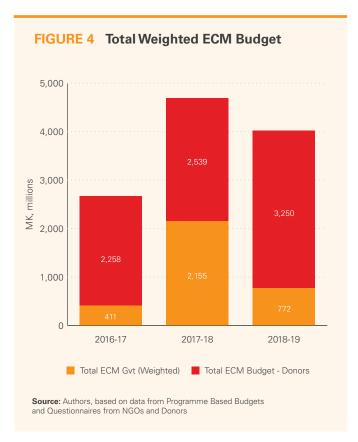
At the District level, the only identifiable ECM-related budget line was "Primary child protection services" (Programme 99.01) under the Gender sector. Unfortunately, not all District Councils committed resources to this sub-program. In the FY 2018-19, for example, a total of 19 out of 28 District Councils allocated resources to this sub-programme. This was a significant improvement from eleven Districts in 2017-18.

None of PBBs for District Councils had performance indicators and targets related to child marriage. Without clear targets and indicators, there is a very high risk that ECM will be forgotten, more so because budget lines are lumped up with other programmes. On this point, a respondent commented that "one would have at least expected to see indicators and targets related to child marriage covered under programme 99.01 of the PBB for the MoGCDSW and the Gender sector at the District level." As indicated earlier, this is primarily an issue of the relevant technical/ thematic departments and not for the Ministry of Finance.

#### 3.3 Size of ECM Spending in Malawi

In the FY 2018-19, the apportioned Government budget to programmes which contribute to prevention and response to child marriage was estimated at MK772 million (Figure 4). This represents a 64 per cent decline in nominal and 71 per cent in real terms, compared to MK2.1billion in 2016-17. Before apportionment, Government budget allocations to all ECM related programs in 2018-19 totalled MK5.7 billion, down from MK7 billion in the previous year.

The decrease in total ECM budget from the Government's own resources was mainly driven by a reduction in the allocation to construction of girls' hostels from MK3 billion (un-apportioned) in 2017-18 to MK800 million in 2018-19. The Government ECM budget in 2018-19 is equivalent to 0.05 per cent of the total annual budget and 0.01 per cent of GDP.



<sup>11</sup> Interview with civil society official in Lilongwe, 14 July 2019.

**TABLE 2** List of Weighted ECM Budgets

MDA	ECM-related Programme/Intervention	Estimated ECM Budget (2016-17, in MK Millions)	Estimated ECM Budget (2017-18, in MK Millions)	Estimated ECM Budget (2018-19, in MK Millions)
Malawi Police Service (Vote 341)	74.01 Preventive Policing	7.90	7.92	18.09
District Councils	99.01 Primary Child Protection Services	0.00	2.03	2.40
Judiciary - Child Justice Court (070)	010 Child Justice Court	0.25	0.36	0.46
Malawi Human Rights Commission (Vote 430)	98.1 Human Rights Promotion	0.21	0.55	0.54
Ministry of Civic Education, Culture and Community Development (Vote 170)	70.02 Community Mobilisation & Capacity Building	2.36	2.53	5.16
Ministry of Justice & Constitutional Affairs (Vote 350)	79.10 Human Rights Support	0.02	0.73	0.20
	98.2 Human Rights Protection	0.43	0.02	0.33
MoEST (Vote 250)	060 Construction of Girls' Hostels	151.25	1815.00	484.00
	Bursaries	232.08	232.08	183.55
MoGCDSW (Vote 320)	69.02 Gender Mainstreaming	0.05	0.13	0.22
	69.03 Gender Based Violence	0.20	3.20	6.50
	71.01 Primary Child Protection Services	12.00	58.80	36.08
	71.05 Social Cash Transfer	4.68	11.50	13.22
	99.01 Primary Child Protection Services	0.00	5.36	6.72
MoHP (Vote 310)	Reproductive Health	0.00	8.34	9.10
	Safe Motherhood	0.00	4.50	2.25
	Health Education	0.00	1.77	3.67
Total		411.42	2154.83	772.49

Source: Author, based on estimates in PBBs.

**Off-budget development partners' expenditures on ECM** have modestly trended upwards since 2016-17. In 2018-19, development partners committed about MK3.2 billion to ECM compared to MK2.5 billion in 2017-18 and MK2.2 billion in 2016-17. Compared to the previous year, 2018-19 spending represents a 28 per cent increase in nominal terms and 15 per cent in real terms. The increase in 2018-19 is partly because of the launch of the Spotlight Initiative 12 aimed at addressing GBV, including child marriage. In 2018-19, the budget spent by development partners was equivalent to 0.06 per cent of GDP and about four times more on ECM than the Government.

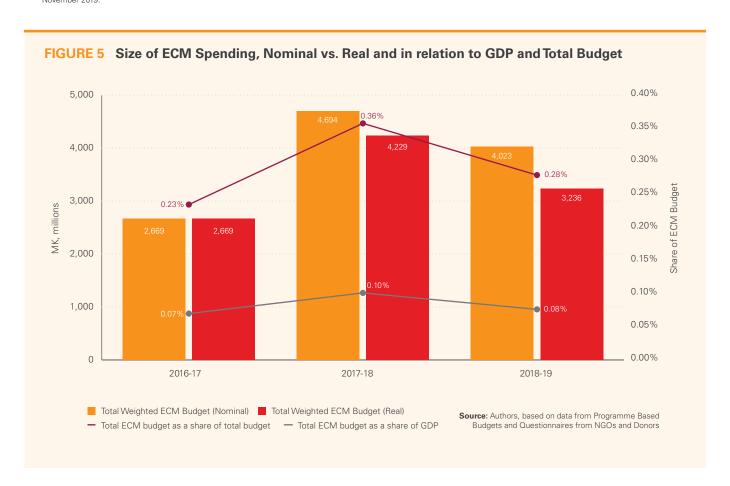
When combined, ECM related budgets from the GoM and development partners total MK4 billion in 2018-19.

This represents a nominal decrease of 14 per cent and 31 per cent in real terms, compared to MK4.7 billion spent in

the previous year. These aggregate figures, however, tend to mask the realities of individual programmes. For instance, while the 2018-19 budget for the SCTP went up, allocations to the Malawi Human Rights Commission, safe motherhood programme and bursaries went down in nominal terms compared to the previous year.

In 2018-19, the aggregate ECM budget was equivalent to 0.28 per cent of the total budget and 0.08 per cent of the GDP of Malawi. The ECM share of Government spending went down in 2018-19 compared in the previous year. This trend mirrored total spending in absolute terms (Figure 6).

With the introduction of PBB, most District Councils now have a sub-programme on 'Primary child protection services', but eight were yet to do so by 2018-19. In 2018-19, the total allocation by District Councils to this programme was MK22.4 million. The 2018-19 amount represents a nominal increase of 15.8 per cent, up from MK19 million in 2017-18, a real increase of 8.5 per cent, if inflation is considered. The 2018-19 total budget for District Councils



<sup>12</sup> The Spotlight Initiative is a global, multi-year partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. The Spotlight Initiative is responding to all forms of violence against women and girls, with a particular focus on domestic and family violence, sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, femicide, trafficking in human beings and sexual and economic (labour) exploitation. See https://spotlightinitiative.org/what-we-do, Accessed on 25 November 2019.

represents only 0.2 per cent of the total ECM Budget. Social welfare officers at District level utilize this budget line to respond to cases of child marriage and to sensitize and engage communities through outreach programmes on the harms of child marriage. Unfortunately, in 2018-19, District Councils were allocated an average of MK1.1 million per year. This allocation was barely enough to cover utilities such as telephone and internet costs.

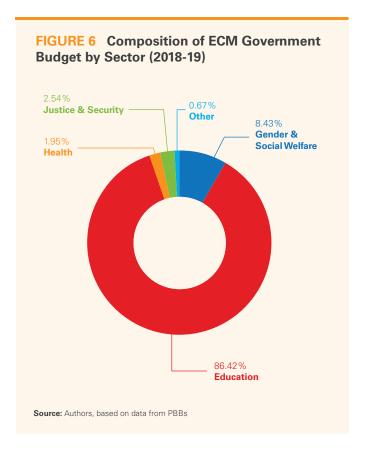
In conclusion, while the GoM has made efforts to commit resources to ECM, the allocations significantly fall short of financial needs outlined in the National Strategy on ECM. The National Strategy is a tool that could be used in the mobilisation of domestic and international resources to ECM. At the same time, there is a need to ensure that allocated resources are disbursed on time and spent effectively.

#### 3.4 Composition of ECM Spending

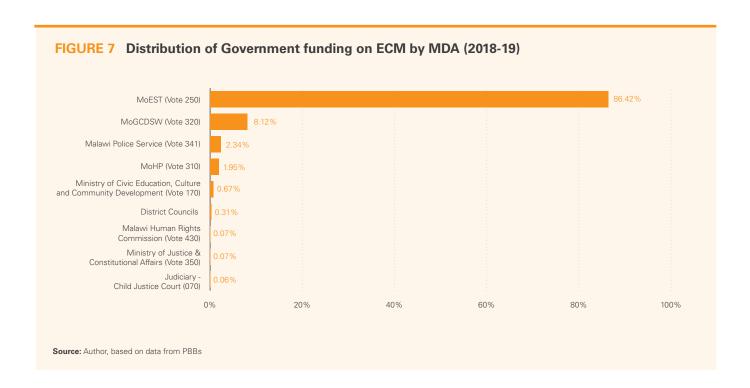
Analysed by sector, the majority of ECM related budgets from the Government (86.4 per cent) are allocated to the education sector, mainly for programmes aimed at keeping girls in school. Education sector allocations were mainly for bursaries, school bonuses and construction of girls' hostels, with less attention given to increasing the supply of secondary schools. In undertaking the apportionment, the study analysed the number of girls which benefitted from bursaries. In 2017-18, for instance, the Government allocated MK3 billion for the construction of girls' hostels. Keeping girls in school is a key prevention strategy for reducing early childbearing and marriage (World Bank, 2018). Long distances to school contribute to girls dropping out. Secondary schools in Malawi are very far apart, with some children walking as much as 9 km to access education every day. This also increases the risk of sexual violence along the way. There is limited data on progress with regards to the implementation of the re-admission policy.

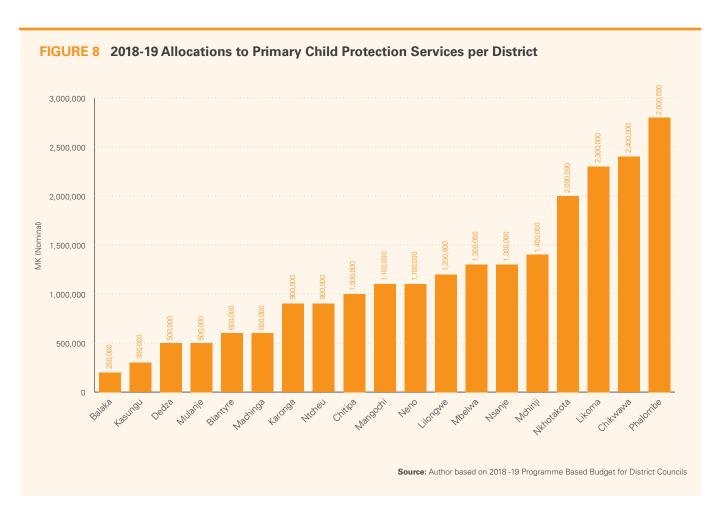
The second-highest share of Government allocations to ECM, estimated at 8.4 per cent, is to the gender and social welfare sector. The justice, human rights and security sector is third, taking up about 2.5 per cent of the 2018-19 ECM budget. Spending on health-related ECM interventions have been low at around 1.95 per cent of total ECM spending. The

study could not find ECM related programmes in agriculture and livelihoods sectors. The underlying reasons for this pattern in sectoral allocations require further investigation. The study established that, on average, the composition of ECM spending by sector has remained the same for the past three years.



From the preceding discussion, Government budget allocations to ECM related programmes are not evenly distributed across sectors. Additionally, allocations to sectors have not been increasing at the same pace. For example, while allocations to the Child Justice Court and Ministry of Justice have trended upwards in real terms, allocations to the relevant arms of the Malawi Police Service have declined in real terms.





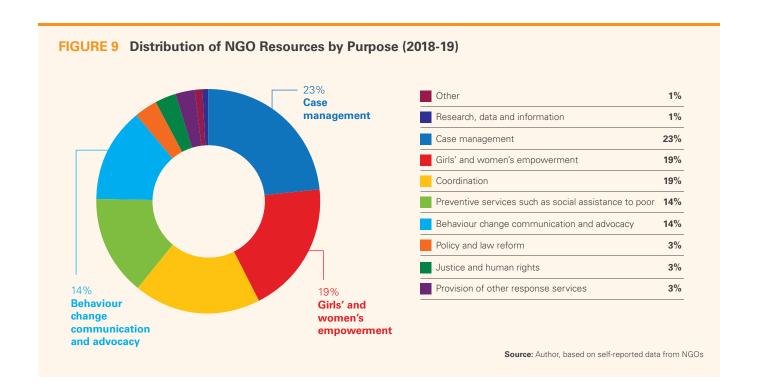
Over the past three years, ECM-related investments by the Government have been concentrated in three MDAs (Figure 7). This mirrors the pattern of sectoral allocations discussed above. These are: Ministry of Education (Vote 250), which accounted for 86.4 per cent of the ECM resources in 2018-19; MoGCDSW (Vote 320) which received the secondhighest share (8.12 per cent); and, the Malawi Police Service (Vote 341) being third with 2.34 per cent of the total budget. This trend is likely to remain the same going forward unless the programmatic mix of ECM budgets is revisited. The MoH preceived the fourth-highest share of 1.95 per cent. The Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs had the least share of the apportioned ECM budget amounting to 0.07 per cent of Government spending on ECM. Although national registration is key to child protection, because of birth and marriage registration, the study did not consider allocations to the National Registration Bureau.

MDAs manage the majority of ECM resources from the Government's resources at the national level. Only transfers to District Councils for the sub-programme on primary child protection services, and gender mainstreaming, were managed locally. Budgets for these two lines took up less than 1 per cent of the total ECM budget between FY 2016-17 and 2018-19. Unfortunately, and as indicated earlier, these funds are so insufficient that they are only used to pay for essential utilities such as electricity, water

and telephone with nothing left for fieldwork. There are also notable variations in allocations to this sub-programme across District Councils, as shown in Figure 8. In 2018/19, for example, allocations to primary child protection services ranged from as low as MK200,000 in Balaka to MK2.8 million in Phalombe. The variations reflect the lack of robust formulae for sharing resources within sectors.

No clear sectoral pattern with regards to CSO budgets could be established due to the multi-component nature of their interventions. Reported ECM expenditures cover a wide range of sectors and elements. However, what is discernible is that CSOs are spending more on response services than the Government. Self-reported data from the organisations who shared their financial information showed that in 2018-19, 23 per cent of ECM expenditures by CSOs were on case management<sup>13</sup> and 19 per cent on girls' and women's empowerment. A similar share (19 per cent) went to coordination, for joint analysis, awarenessraising, community engagements and advocacy. Resources mobilised by coalitions such as GNB and GENET constituted a large share of coordination expenditures. Approximately 14 per cent of ECM spending was spent on behavioural communication (Figure 9).

<sup>13</sup> Case management was used by most organisations to refer to their efforts to support individual girls who have been involved in, or at risk of child marriage.



Analysis of ECM spending patterns show differences in focus between the Government and CSOs. Over the past three years, while the majority of Government resources on ECM went to keeping girls in school through bursaries, construction of girls' hostels and the social cash transfer programmes, CSO expenditures, on the other hand, were mainly for case management, coordinated advocacy, awareness-raising campaigns and empowerment of girls. It was interesting to note that CSOs invested more on coordination than Government. In 2018-19, for example, CSOs invested approximately 18 per cent of their total budgets on ECM in coordinating their efforts through national coalitions such as GNB and GENET. Unfortunately, the Government did not commit any resources to coordination structures such as ECM Task Force and TWGs.

In conclusion, the study observed skewed allocations to sectors and MDAs. The allocations are tilted towards specific programmes and are not aligned to the six outcome areas in the National Strategy on ECM. This may ultimately compromise progress in ECM.

#### 3.5 Financing of ECM-Related Interventions

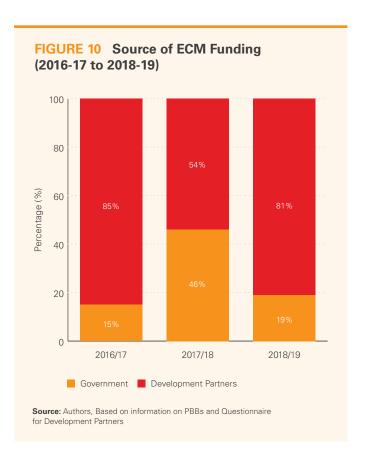
For the past three years (2016-19), on average, 73 per cent of all ECM resources in Malawi came from external sources. All these resources were spent off-budget through NGOs and UN agencies, notably UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women. The main development partners financing ECM expenditures in Malawi are Canadian Fund, Norwegian Government, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Commission, SIMAVI, Gates Foundation, USAID, and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID). Key international NGOs (INGOs) with comprehensive programmes on ECM are: Save the Children, Plan International and World Vision.

At a time when the majority of the ECM resources are off-budget, the study found that there is weak coordination between and amongst NGOs, development partners and with Government when it comes to decisions on how ECM resources should be distributed across sectors and Districts. As a result, there are numerous "overlaps, duplication of efforts and concentration of funding in a few District Councils." Although organisations such as the GNB and GENET are "doing a sterling job to coordinate their members, there is very minimal coordination with non-

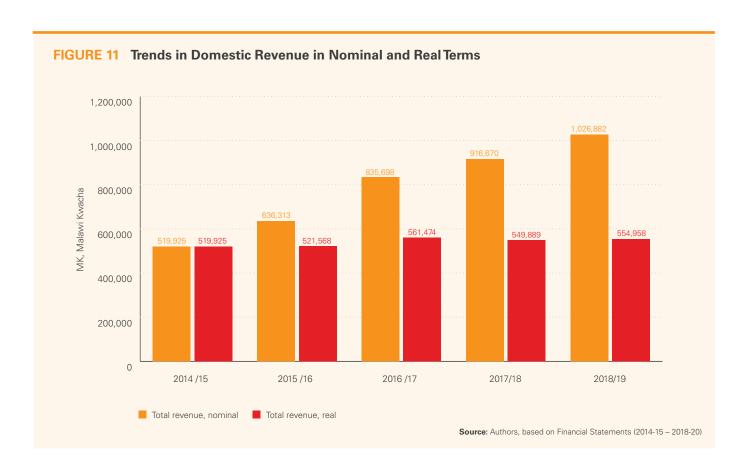
members and District Councils."<sup>15</sup> The study also observed subtle fights for space and visibility amongst NGOs, as they compete for meagre donor resources. The ad hoc nature of the ECM Task Force, TWGs and SWGs also compound the problem.

Government financing of ECM related programmes is constrained by limited fiscal space. With a small and relatively less diversified economy, dependent on agriculture, Malawi's capacity to generate enough resources to finance its development agenda is limited. The underperformance of revenues and grants is a recurring problem in Malawi, especially for non-tax revenue. Growth in revenue and grants, which averaged 16 per cent over the past five years, has not been fast enough to keep pace with financial needs. The subdued growth in revenue is partly linked to sluggish economic growth, low tax base and, to some extent, inefficiencies in revenue collection. In real terms, domestic revenue has barely increased since the FY 2014-15.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with a civil society official, Lilongwe, 28 July 2019.



<sup>14</sup> Interview with Government official, Lilongwe, 23 July 2019.



At a sector level, the limited fiscal space is reflected in low priority given to social welfare-related MDAs, especially the MoGCDSW. For the past few years, the MoGCDSW (Vote 320) – which is the lead ministry on ECM – has persistently received significantly low ceilings, compared to its mandate. In 2018-19, for instance, the allocation to MoGCDSW (MK4.4 billion) constituted 0.3 per cent of the national budget. This amount excludes about MK11 billion earmarked for the Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP).

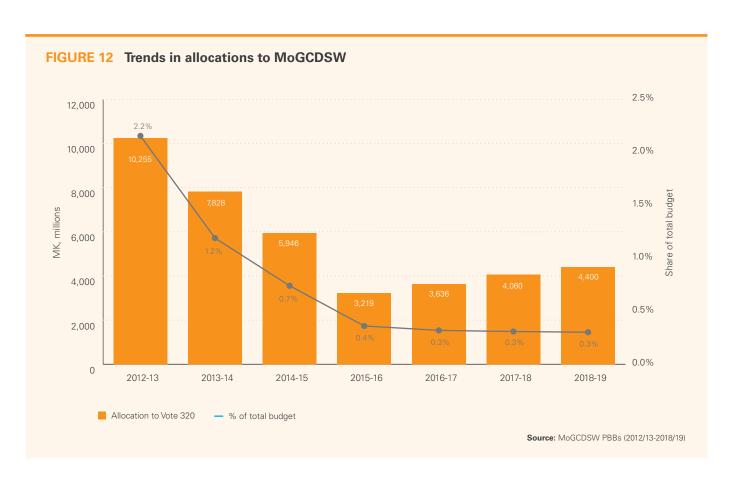
**Ceilings to District Councils for the gender sector have also been very low.** The ceilings per District have averaged MK6 million over the past two fiscal years. This amount is divided between two main programme areas, namely gender, and social welfare (child protection and early childhood development (ECD). In 2018-19, the average allocation to primary child protection services for 19 District Councils, which budgeted for this program, was MK1.1 million, which translates to about MK90,000 (US\$125) per month.

Due to revenues falling short of expenditure targets, the Government has resorted to borrowing, with deficit financing averaging 19.4 per cent of total budgets over the past five years. On average, domestic borrowing finances about 60 per cent of the annual deficit with the remainder covered by foreign loans. In FY 2018-19 alone, 81 per cent of the deficit (MK320.2 billion) was financed using domestic borrowing (MK258.9 billion). Unless contained, and kept within sustainable levels, the growing debt burden has the potential to threaten macro-economic stability.

In the short term, with limited domestic revenue, external aid will continue to play a critical role in financing ECM and other programmes in Malawi. It is therefore crucial for the Government and development partners to work

together to mobilise available international resources on child protection. Apart from robust engagement with bilateral donors, there is also a need for the Government to make a business case for the financing of ECM interventions to multilateral initiatives. Such as the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children<sup>16</sup>, the World Bank's Investment in Early Years Programme, and the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to ECM, to mention only a few examples. UN agencies such as UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women have a crucial role to play in helping the Government to make a case for increased financing of the National Strategy on ECM.

See https://www.end-violence.org/what-we-do, Accessed on 22 November 2019.



# 3.6 ECM Funding Gap Analysis

The National Strategy on ECM (2018-2023) estimates that MK55.4 billion will be required, for the five years, to implement planned actions aimed at reducing the prevalence of child marriage in Malawi by 20 per cent by 2022. As indicated in Chapter 2, the Strategy is structured around six outcomes areas (Table 3). In the first year (2018-19), it is estimated that MK9.9 billion will be required to implement a wide range of services across the six outcome areas.

By not including some critical elements required of a robust child protection system, cost estimates in the National Strategy on ECM under-estimates the real financial needs on the ground. For instance, many of the response services, including case management and victim support, are not included in cost estimates. In the preceding chapters, it was established that most resources committed by the Government to ECM are for educational support, with preventive intent. While the focus on prevention is understandable, the reality on the ground

is that many children are still getting married every day and require a continuum of support services, from legal aid to psychosocial support. Additionally, other crucial areas such as a professional workforce, data and statistics are also not adequately covered in the cost estimates of the National Strategy on ECM.

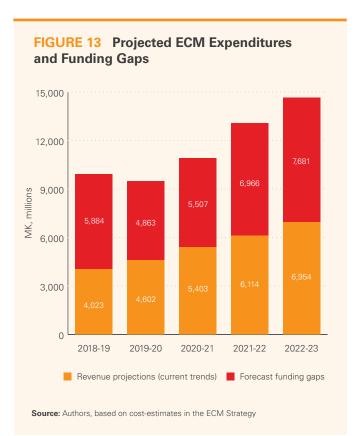
Total annual ECM budgets for FY 2018-19 fell short of the modest financial estimates in the National Strategy on ECM. In FY 2018-19, when the Strategy was launched, the estimated ECM related funding (MK4 billion) fell short of the MK9.9 billion targets by 59% per cent. If current spending trends continue, the forecast revenue will fall short by an average of 52 per cent per year for the period 2019-2022.

To accelerate progress in ECM, the Government and development partners would have to at least double the number of resources committed to ECM related programmes every year. In 2020-21, for example, the Government will require an additional 5.5 billion to implement the National Strategy on ECM fully.

TABLE 3 Cost Estimates to Implement the National Strategy on ECM

Outcome Areas	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Allocations in MK Millions (Nominal Figures)						
Behaviour Change	999	921	934	960	1,014	
Access to Education	5,303	4,682	5,554	7,081	7,484	
Sexual and Reproductive Health	550	615	687	652	771	
Economic Empowerment	2,344	2,536	3,053	3,715	4,598	
Enabling Legal and Policy Environment	329	373	363	380	375	
Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation	383	338	320	292	393	
Total	9,908	9,465	10,911	13,080	14,635	

Source: National Strategy on ECM (2018-22)



If current trends continue, the main gaps in funding would be in the areas of economic and livelihoods, sexual and reproductive health, economic empowerment and enforcement of relevant policies and legislation to combat child marriage.<sup>17</sup>

Programmatically, as a percentage of the required ECM budget, the most significant funding gap is in coordination, monitoring and evaluation (88 per cent shortfall in 2018-19). The second-largest shortfall is in economic empowerment (71 per cent), followed by an enabling legal and policy environment (65 per cent), access to education (63 per cent), reproductive and sexual health (58 per cent) and lastly behaviour change communication (47 per cent). However, in absolute terms, the most significant shortfalls are in economic empowerment and access to education due to the vast sums of money involved.

Four spending priority interventions were flagged out by the majority of research participants, for consideration by the GoM in future budgets. These are:

- Access to education. There is a need to increase the supply of secondary schools and keep girls in school through the construction of more schools and leveraging available social assistance programmes, including bursaries. However, given that a sizeable amount of the ECM budget is already being spent on educationrelated expenditures, it would be essential to assess the impacts of investments in education on ECM.
- Poverty alleviation and livelihoods support. Nearly all research participants interviewed during the study underscored the need for Government to support programs aimed at improving household income, including social cash transfers, women's economic empowerment programmes, agriculture support and other employment creation opportunities for young mothers. This is in recognition of the fact that poverty is one of the underlying drivers of child marriage.
- Case management and victim support. There was an overwhelming recommendation for the Government to invest in more social workers, police, and the judiciary to handle child marriage cases.
- **Community-based behavioural communication.** The main emphasis was on resourcing community structures

17 This is based on analysis of funded programmes as well as interviews with key

such as Mothers' Groups, faith-based organisations, and CVSUs to roll out communication and advocacy programmes to ECM.<sup>18</sup>

The above list should, however, not be the only focus of Government. They only serve as the tip of the iceberg on what the Government should prioritise in resource allocation. Other elements should not be ignored, considering that ECM interventions should be rolled out in all relevant sectors to be effective. A balance in allocations to various outcome areas of the National Strategy on ECM is also required.

# 3.7 Implementation of ECM Budgets

Like other thematic areas, ECM budgets also face several challenges when it comes to implementation. Most notably, the Gender sector reported huge variances between the approved and released budgets. The majority of District social welfare officers who participated in the study reported that they receive an average of 70 per cent of the committed budget for other recurrent transactions (ORT) every year. Officials shared the same sentiments in other MDAs. The above finding is not surprising because there are often noticeable variances between approved and revised budgets at mid-year, as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4 Selected Examples of Approved and Revised Budgets

ECM-related Vote	2017/18 (Annual)		2018/19 (Mid-year)		
	Approved	Revised	Approved	Revised	
Gender Sector (District Councils)	420	399	221	187	
Variance for Gender Sector		(5%)		(15%)	
MoGCDSW	4,599	4,060			
Variance for MoGCDSW		(12%)			

Source: Programme Based Budgets for 2017/18 and 2018/19

## Budget cuts in the social welfare sector are also rife.

In 2018-19, for example, the Gender sector allocation<sup>19</sup> for District Councils was cut by 15 per cent from MK221 million

<sup>18</sup> The four items are highlighted because a significant number of respondents highlighted them. For example, nearly all respondents mentioned the need to increase access to secondary school and to tackle poverty.

<sup>19</sup> Identifiable ECM-related budgets at sub-national level are drawn from this allocation.

to MK187 million at mid-year (Table 4). In 2017-18 the annual budget to the MoGCDSW was reduced by nearly 12 per cent from MK4.5 billion to MK4 billion at mid-year. Development budgets often experience the most significant cuts. In 2017-18, for example, only 20 per cent of the approved budget for the construction of girls' hostels (Project 060) was disbursed to the Ministry of Education, as shown in Table 5. Budget execution rates for capital projects have been very low for the past few years partly because of delays in disbursement of funds due to cash flow challenges, as well as protracted procurement processes.

Low budget execution rates were also reported amongst NGOs, although exact figures are not known. Two of the three big bilateral donors who participated in the study reported that several of their NGO partners often fail to spend allocated resources within agreed times. This has resulted in budgets being carried over to the following year. There is no one reason for this. On the one hand, there are supply issues such as delayed disbursements. Approximately 60 per cent of NGOs who participated in the study said that they experienced delays in the disbursement of grants from their donors. On the other (NGO) side, there are issues to do with capacity, procurement systems and drive for results by implementers, including District councils.

Lack of information and cross-sectoral collaboration in budget execution was also identified as a challenge by several research participants. Although most NGOs inform Districts Councils about their ECM plans, they rarely share information on disbursements and actual expenditures. As one Government official reported, "when you ask for expenditure reports and financial balances, the NGOs will refer you to their headquarters in Lilongwe".

To conclude, the issue at stake is not just more money to ECM programmes but also a better use of limited resources. Budget execution requires further investigation by both Government and development partners.

TABLE 5 Variance Between Approved and Disbursed Budget for the Construction of Girls' Hostels (Project 060)

Year	Approved (MK Millions)	Revised (MK Millions)	Funding/Disbursed (MK Millions)	Expenditure (MK Millions)	Spending rate (Percentage)
2016/17	250	250	-	93	37%
2017/18	3,000	3,000	601	599	20%

Source: MoEST (2019)

<sup>20</sup> Interview with a District Official, 2 July 2019

# **Chapter 4**

# Conclusions and Recommendations

### 4.1 Discussion

With the launch of the National Strategy on ECM in 2018, there is no better time than now for the Government of Malawi to accelerate efforts to ECM. The Strategy, anchored in the MGDS III, National Constitution and the National Children's Policy, is indeed a lifetime opportunity for all stakeholders to rally their efforts towards one goal making child marriage history in Malawi. For this to happen, the urgency to increase and improve the quality of public spending on preventive and response programmes and interventions cannot be over-emphasised. That is the crux of this report. Unless adequate resources are mobilised, equitably allocated and effectively utilised to implement the National Strategy on ECM and other relevant sector plans, the rights of many children will continue to be violated - the result is a stolen childhood. The National Strategy on ECM recognizes the multi-sectoral nature of child marriage, and that the problem should be fought from all fronts, by all stakeholders.

Analysis of budgets of several MDAs with the mandate to deliver on the National ECM Strategy showed a weak link between the National Strategy on ECM and public budgeting. The study showed that there is virtually no MDA with an indicator or performance target which directly mentions child marriage. One wonders how progress towards attainment of the outcomes and targets in the National Strategy will be achieved. Secondly, the trends in spending across sectors do not reflect additional financial needs to implement the strategy. Everything appears to be business as usual. In fact, and surprisingly so, allocations to

programmes such as 'Primary child protection services' have declined in real terms. As the preceding chapter showed, aggregate allocations to ECM related programmes declined in nominal and real terms if compared to the previous year.

The study has observed that significant funding gaps exist if current expenditures are compared with financial estimates in the National Strategy on ECM. In monetary terms, and on average, an additional MK6 billion will be required every year to implement the strategy. As hinted by research participants, resources will be required to improve access and quality of primary and secondary education, transform social and cultural practices and to empower women and girls economically. There is also an urgent need to increase the supply of age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health services and information.

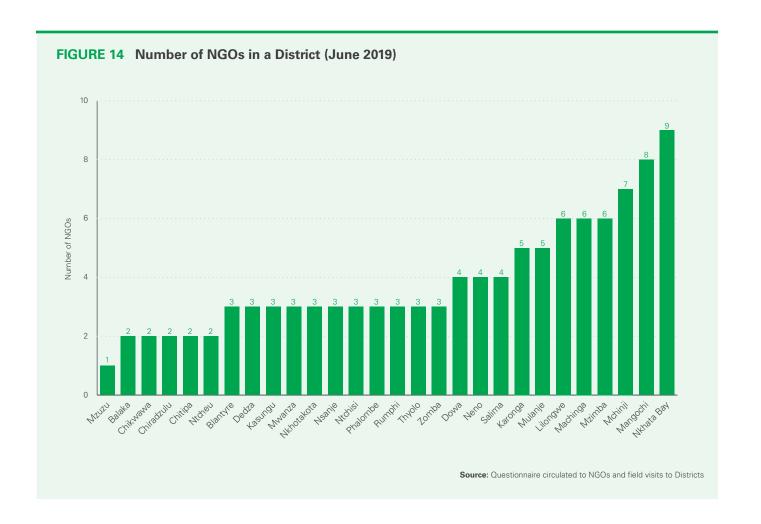
The centralisation of ECM resources in the hands of a few MDAs and prominent CSOs at the national level has constrained the fight against child marriage across the country. Nearly two in every three respondents contacted during the study were of the view that more resources should be channelled to District Councils. Currently, the majority of resources for key ECM sectors such as Gender and Social Welfare have not been devolved. Only a tiny fraction is transferred to District Councils as other recurrent transactions (ORT). The result is that those frontline social workers doing the hard work at the community level to prevent and respond to child marriage are poorly resourced.

Inequities in the distribution of ECM resources by both Government and NGOs, which have been observed, require further examination. The study revealed that among CSOs, there is a high concentration of NGOs in Districts such as Nkhatabay, Mangochi and Mchinji. This pattern does not entirely reflect child marriage rates (highest in Phalombe). Even in Districts where CSOs have a presence, they usually concentrate on a few TAs. This project-based approach to ECM potentially undermines efforts to strengthen the systems for child protection sustainably. Several District Officials reported that due to skewed funding, their outreach, case management and child protection monitoring tended to be focused on Districts where there is funding from NGOs. Even significant initiatives such as Spotlight and the Government Child Protection Information Management System are only operational in selected Districts.

# But the issue is not only about geographic skewness, ECM spending is also unevenly distributed across outcome areas outlined in the National Strategy on ECM.

The study revealed that spending by Government and CSOs is not equitably distributed across the six outcome areas of the National Strategy on ECM. The study found that most CSOs are focusing on behaviour change – sometimes with little evidence of sustainable and transformative change - and case management, with the Government concentrating on access to education. The result is that some outcome areas are neglected, generating a risk of ineffective ECM spending.

Multiple financing and expenditure systems by the Government and CSOs are potentially creating inefficiencies in spending. Several stakeholders contacted as part of this study bemoaned a lack of robust coordination in the financing of ECM interventions. The issue here is not



a lack of structures, but their functionality, which is intricately connected to their funding. If all the resources were equitably allocated and effectively utilised, progress towards achieving targets in the National Strategy on ECM will be accelerated.

ECM is still seen as a MoGCDSW issue, although the National Strategy acknowledges the centrality of a multi-sectoral response. Although several MDAs admitted that they have a role to play in combatting child marriage,

many felt that it's not their core business. Accordingly, they did not see the reason for including indicators and targets on child marriage in their program-based budgets. A systems approach to child protection requires all relevant sectors to recognize their responsibility to plan, budget for, monitor, and link their actions with others.

### 4.2 Recommendations

### 4.2.1 Recommendations to Government

- i. Strengthen the investment case for ECM. Feedback from both Government officials and development partners has shown that the case for investing in ECM is not well-communicated and understood by budget makers. Accordingly, the MoGCDSW, especially the Directorate on Children's Affairs, should work with the ECM Task Force to raise the profile of the National Strategy on ECM in planning and budgeting circles.
- ii. Enhance the visibility of ECM in Programme Based Budgets of relevant MDAs, especially the MoGCDSW. At the very least, the study recommends inclusion of at least one indicator and performance target, aligned to the National Strategy on ECM. This is an essential step for the Government to track progress in the implementation of the National Strategy and the relevant SDGs.
- iii. Review cost estimates in the National Strategy on ECM to cover missing elements. The preceding discussion has shown that the cost estimates in the National Strategy on ECM are understated because many aspects have been left out. Including funding for case management, child participation, social service/ child protection workforce, professional development of existing staff, data and statistics and coordination. Altogether, these elements help strengthen the national child protection system.

- iv. Increase the size of transfers to the District Councils for the gender sector and ensure each Council has a budget line on 'Primary child protection services' (programme 99.01). The transfers to District Councils (averaging MK200,000) per month are insufficient to make a difference.
- v. Alongside efforts to mobilise additional resources to cover the funding gap, there is a need to ensure efficient and effective use of all available domestic and external resources. Among other measures, the Government should strengthen joint planning and budgeting across sectors and with NGOs as well as transparency and accountability in public spending on ECM by all actors.
- vi. Strengthen the child protection workforce, especially at District level. Implementation of the Strategy requires skilled and dedicated cadres. Unfortunately, there are fewer child protection workers, with the majority of them working voluntarily, with no motivation to continue. The study recommends that the Government increased the paid workforce and ensure those recruited have the requisite skills and training/capacity enhancement. This means that the MoGCDSW should take the necessary steps to plan for the recruitment, financing and retention of these crucial cadres.

# 4.2.1 Recommendations to NGOs and Donors

- i. Strengthen joint planning and information. Through networks such as GNB and GENET, NGOs are encouraged to strengthen information sharing on annual budgets at national and District level. Moreover, there is need to create a mechanism for periodic tracking and measurement of all inflows for ECM. Additionally, NGOs are encouraged to participate in relevant SWGs and TWGs, as well as the ECM Task Force.
- ii. Enhance transparency and accountability on ECM resources. To win the confidence of communities, District Councils and the entire Government, NGOs should voluntarily share their annual plans and in-year reports with relevant authorities to improve accountability for ECM resources.
- iii. Support Government to tap into global resources. International NGOs are encouraged to work with the Government, together with UN Agencies, to support the mobilization of international public resources to complement what is locally available. Given the small size of the economy, aid will continue to be critical for Malawi.

- iv. Regular analysis of budgetary allocations to child protection. NGOs are encouraged to periodically analyse national and local budgets to measure progress by the GoM in investing in ECM. Civil society networks such as GNB and NGO-CCR can play crucial roles in this regard.
- v. NGOs have a critical role to play in terms of advocating and holding to account MDAs for implementation of sectoral resources specified in the National Strategy to ECM. They also have a role in actively reporting their contribution to addressing ECM by sector, to help report and on the progress of implementing the National Strategy.

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# **Annex 1: List of Key Programmes to End Child Marriage**

# Health

- Comprehensive sexual and reproductive health. education for married and unmarried adolescents.
- Behaviour change communication campaigns to influence and promote healthy SRH health practices, and to educate communities on the harmful health impact of child marriage.
- Youth-friendly SRHR services (Services under this strand of work include: family planning services, e.g. birth spacing, safe and affordable contraception, access to safe abortion services, etc.; prevention and management of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV prevention and treatment (including prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV).
- Targeted and sensitive mental health counselling and psychosocial services for girls, including married girls.
- Appropriate maternal and newborn health services, including access to emergency obstetric care (e.g. monitoring of labour, trained birth attendants and newborn care).
- HIV services for married and unmarried adolescents.
- Screening and referral services for girls who experience intimate partner violence, particularly married girls.
- Training of healthcare providers on the needs of adolescent girls.

# **Education**

- Girls' access to primary and secondary education: access to free, compulsory primary and free/low-cost secondary education for all girls and boys, including married girls in line with the National Girls Education Strategy that focuses on reducing child marriage and teenage pregnancies.
- Scholarships or other social assistance to poorest girls (bursaries, financial support for school fees, school materials, uniforms, transport costs to school like

- bicycles) to overcome financial barriers to accessing education.
- Vocational and alternative education for out-of-school girls.
- Safe spaces for both at risk and married girls to reduce GBV and retain girls (e.g. provide training).
- Gender transformative training for girls and boys, and bystander prevention training for boys.
- Safe Schools program, in collaboration with MoGCDSW.
- Livelihoods and vocational training.
- Girls hostels and boarding schools.
- Menstrual Hygiene Management and other interventions related to sanitation and hygiene in schools.
- Implementation of the re-admission policy for girls.
- Teacher training to increase quality education for girls, e.g. on gender equality, local relevant curriculum development, training teachers on non-violent pedagogy, monitoring school campus for safety for girls, SGBV training, sexual harassment training.
- Counselling and other targeted support to girls, including through Mother's Groups.

# **Social Welfare**

- Case management.
- Behaviour change communication campaigns and IEC materials provision. This covers many areas including: public awareness campaigns on child marriage and girls' empowerment; training (including for specific groups such as civil society, journalists, the judiciary, and police); publications (annual and special reports) on child marriage and related adolescent girls' and women's rights issues; seminars and workshops on child marriage and related issues; community-based initiatives on child marriage (sports, theatre, film, art, etc.); development of curricula for schools in partnership with education authorities (e.g. on child marriage, comprehensive sexuality education, awareness of minimum age of marriage laws, etc.); and, media events related to child marriage (press releases, conferences, Summits, international days, etc.).

- Functioning referral systems between sectors (child protection, health and education services have protocols on identifying the warning signs and addressing child marriage).
- Safe Schools program, in collaboration with MoEST.
- Children's Corners.
- Life skills for out-of-school/ marginalized girls.

# **Justice and Human Rights**

- Child-friendly courts.
- Case management by the police and the judiciary
- Training of the judiciary and police to provide gender and child-sensitive response to child marriage, but also GBV, sexual violence, marital rape, sexual harassment, gender equality, teen pregnancy, divorce cases, etc.
- Annulment of child marriages.
- Women and girls' empowerment programmes.
- Protection of children on the move and in refugee camps.
- Provision of safe houses and temporary shelter for married and unmarried girls suffering from domestic violence from intimate partners.
- Legal aid services for married and unmarried girls.
- Implementation of legislation/law enforcement on the age of marriage.

# Livelihoods, Girls and Women's Empowerment and Economic Support

- Conditional/Unconditional Cash Transfers and other social assistance to girls and their families.
- Life skills training.
- Life skills and empowerment training.
- Safe settlements and housing.
- Workforce education and training.
- Employment services for women, such as job. placement and on-the-job training.
- Initiatives to increase financial literacy, savings and loan

skills.

- Microfinance opportunities for girls and women.
- Subsidies and loans for access to resources.
- Social safety nets for women-headed households.

# Data, Systems and Professional Work-Force

- Civil registration system (births, marriages).
- Child Protection Information Management Systems.
- Child Protection Workers/ Volunteers.
- Training and professional development.

# **Agriculture**

- Agricultural skills training (for both household consumption and income generation) targeting girls at risk of child marriage and married girls.
- Women's and girls' access to and use of energy and time-saving technologies, particularly those related to household and domestic work.
- Provision of agricultural assets (such as livestock) for girls at risk of child marriage and married girls, and to their families.
- Training and deployment of female agricultural extension workers, and support initiatives which increase outreach and target women farmers, e.g. encouraging married girls' or out-of-school girls' participation in farmer field schools.

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